

REMARKS

Claim 20 is pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Gleason** (US Patent No. 5,914,613) in view of **Hino** (US Patent No. 5,848,465). Favorable reconsideration is requested.

In the present invention, the electrode pads 15 are formed on a membrane-type flexible wiring board 11A of the device testing contactor, and the membrane-type flexible wiring board 11A is directly reinforced by a reinforcing member 12A, as shown in Fig. 1. The wiring board 11A and the reinforcing member 12A are collectively molded and bonded to each other. Since the pads 15 on the wiring board 11A are firmly supported by the reinforcing member 12A, if the electrodes of the device being tested are depressed on the pads 15 on the wiring board 11A in order to test the device, the contacting force between the electrode pads 15 of the contactor and the electrodes of the device being tested can be maintained at a sufficient level by the use of the reinforcing member 12A.

Applicants respectfully submit that Gleason in view of Hino does not teach or suggest “the wiring board being *directly reinforced* by a reinforcing member” as recited in claim 20.

Gleason discloses that the flexible membrane assembly 72a is interconnected to the flat support 70 by an interposed elastomeric layer 98. (Col. 7, line 67 to col. 8, line 2; Fig. 8.) Moreover, Gleason discloses that a backplane conductive layer 94 is formed between the elastomeric layer 98 and the membrane assembly 72a. (Fig. 8.) Thus, Gleason does not teach or suggest the wiring board being directly reinforced by a reinforcing member.

Hino discloses a method of fabrication of a sheet probe structure for circuit testing. Hino's method includes forming a laminate of a copper foil 2a and a flexible substrate 1. A rigid substrate 3 is bonded to the laminate by heating. An adhesive layer 5 is interposed between the flexible substrate 1 and the rigid substrate 3. Since the flexible substrate 1 is not directly reinforced by the rigid substrate 3, Hino does not teach or suggest the wiring board being directly reinforced by a reinforcing member. Therefore, Gleason in view of Hino does not teach or suggest the elements as recited in claim 20.

Applicants respectfully submit that Gleason in view of Hino does not teach or suggest “the wiring board and the reinforcing member collectively molded and bonded to each other” as recited in claim 20.

The Office Action acknowledges that Gleason fails to disclose that the wiring board and reinforcing member are collectively molded and bonded to each other. (Office Action, page 2.) The Office Action cites Hino for disclosing this feature.

In Hino, rigid substrate 3 is bonded to flexible substrate 1 using an adhesive layer 5, but the rigid substrate 3 and the flexible substrate 1 are not collectively molded to each other. (*See* Abstract; col. 4, lines 25-27.) Therefore, Gleason in view of Hino does not teach or suggest the elements as recited in claim 20.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 20 is hereby solicited.

Request for Withdrawal of Finality of Office Action

Applicants respectfully submit that the present Office Action should not have the status of Final.

The Office Action dated March 8, 2006, at page 3 states: “Gleason et al. ... **exclusively teach** that ... a membrane-type wiring board ... and a reinforcing member ... are collectively molded and bonded to each other.”

Applicants’ response dated June 8, 2006, at page 6 states: “There is no teaching in Gleason of the wiring board ... and the reinforcing member ... being collectively molded and bonded.”

The present Office Action dated August 8, 2006 at page 2 states: “Gleason et al. **fail to disclose** that their wiring board ... and the reinforcing member ... are collectively molded and bonded to each other.” The present Office Action now cites Hino for disclosing this feature.

The present Office Action takes the position that Applicant’s amendment necessitated the new ground of rejection. (Office Action, page 4.) However, the amendment was not considered in the Office Action. The only amendment was to sole claim 20. Claim 20 was amended to

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recite: "the wiring board being directly reinforced by a reinforcing member." The present Office Action does not state how the references disclose this feature. (See Office Action, August 8, 2006, page 2.)

Since the present rejection was not necessitated by the last amendment, it is respectfully submitted that the present Office Action is not properly made final. Accordingly, withdrawal of the "final" status of the present Office Action is respectfully requested.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants submit that that the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
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